



Red Arrow Brigade **FAMILY UPDATE**

March 22, 2009

Here is our third update from Fort Bliss as most of the troops in the 32nd Brigade are in their fourth week of training.

In our last update we told you that it was unseasonably cold and rainy here, but that's all changed now. Most days are sunny now, with hot and dry weather close to the conditions in Iraq. Temperatures here range from the high 70s to mid-80s, and many sweaty days of training have occurred. Don't worry though, the Soldiers here are constantly reminded to drink plenty of water to keep from dehydrating.



During this past week the brigade has continued to train in preparation for our deployment to Iraq, and some companies have seen long and tiring training days. The training isn't just ranges and training lanes, many companies have started to learn "combatives," a hand-to-hand fighting style that mixes wrestling and martial arts. Combatives is a useful skill to have, as it teaches discipline and creates a form of friendly competition. It is also a great form of physical training that works the whole body. Competitive matches last for six minutes and can be rather draining. The 32nd

will even be represented in the Fort Bliss Winter Combative Tournament by one of our own Soldiers. We will let you know how he does in the competition after it's over.

The housing here is surprisingly comfortable. About one-third of the brigade is living in the "Alamo" complex on Camp McGregor. If you're wondering why we call it that, just check out the building in the picture to the right. The Alamo is made up of four two-story buildings with eight open living areas. Each living area



houses approximately 32 Soldiers. The Alamo has large bathrooms and showers as well as dayrooms, the Army's term for a communal recreation room, for Soldiers to gather and hang out with each other. In the open bay style housing many Soldiers get to know one another by playing cards and video games, or just simply talking and living with one another.

Another 1,000 Soldiers live in barracks that house between three and six Soldiers per room. These buildings are a little closer to some of the facilities Soldiers use than the Alamo, which seems like it's miles from anything else. These buildings have smaller bathrooms and lack the common areas that the Alamo has, but they do have a barbecue area that we're aching to try and a picnic area where Soldiers can hang out.



The other 1,200 Soldiers are live and train in another camp called Westbrook, a few miles from McGregor. Soldiers living there are housed in approximately 80 large tents. These facilities are closer to the training areas for detainee operations and some of the firing ranges. Unfortunately, they are quite a distance from the McGregor Post Exchange and MWR resources. However, there is a chow hall and a smaller PX close to the housing areas at Westbrook.

Soldiers are looking forward to their four-day pass and the opportunity to see family and friends who travel down here to see them. Our last update included information on El Paso. This time we'll tell you about some of the features in another local area of interest, Las Cruces, N.M. (information from Wikipedia.org).

Las Cruces, N.M.

Las Cruces is a city in Doña Ana County, N.M. The population is 89,722, making it the second largest city in the state. Las Cruces is the center of an agricultural region irrigated by the Rio Grande, which flows just west of the city. Las Cruces bisects the fertile Mesilla Valley, the flood plain of the Rio Grande which extends from Hatch, N.M., to the west side of El Paso. Las Cruces is also the home of New Mexico State University. NMSU is New Mexico's only land grant university, with more than 16,000 graduate and undergraduate



students on the main campus. The Organ Mountains are east of the city, and the area is also close to the Doña Ana mountains, the Robledo mountains, and Picacho peak.

Las Cruces has cultural events throughout the year, and is home to several museums and one of the Southwest's largest book stores. The following points of interest are within a few miles of Las Cruces:

- The town of Mesilla is a suburb of Las Cruces. It avoided the urban renewal that Las Cruces went through in the 1960s and still has its historic downtown plaza. The San Albino Church is on the plaza. The Gadsden Museum is dedicated to the family of Albert Jennings Fountain and includes artifacts from the time of the Gadsden Purchase, which made Mesilla a U.S. possession. There are many shops and restaurants on or near the plaza. There is a Visitor Center inside the Town Hall. The Shalam Colony and Oahspe Museum commemorates the utopian Shalam Colony that existed near Las Cruces from 1884 to 1907 and the Oahspe bible that they used.
- The Space Murals Museum in Organ has scale models of the Space Shuttle and Space Station Freedom and some relics of the Space Age.
- Fort Selden State Monument is a former United States Army post, active from 1865 to 1891. Buffalo Soldiers were stationed here. Douglas MacArthur lived here as a boy (his father was post commander). The fort is located in Radium Springs, N.M., 13 miles north of Las Cruces on Interstate 25.
- White Sands Missile Range, about 20 miles east of Las Cruces on U.S. Highway 70, offers tourists a museum and a missile park. There is a refurbished V-2 rocket on display.
- Aguirre Spring Campground is a hiking area in the Organ Mountains. The entrance is on U.S. Highway 70 on the east side of the mountains. Dripping Springs Natural Area is another hiking area, located farther south and on the west side of the mountains. Both areas are managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

We look forward to seeing anyone that is coming down to visit over the four-day pass, and wish everyone the best back home. Thank you for your support and I hope that you stay in touch with your Soldiers; we will definitely keep in touch with you!

— Pfc. Tyler Lasure
32nd BCT Public Affairs

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Photo Captions

Page 1 (top):

Spc. Dustin Chambers and Staff Sgt. Mike Schraeder of Company D, 132nd BSB, grapple during a combatives class here at Camp McGregor on March 19. *Photo by Spc. Michelle Gonzalez.*

Page 1 (bottom):

A 32nd Brigade Soldier runs past the front of one of four buildings that make up the “Alamo.” These barracks buildings that house 1,000 32nd Brigade troops have a distinctive southwestern look. *Photo by Pfc. Tyler Lasure*

Page 2 (top):

Pfc. Aaron Neimann of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 32nd Brigade, and others hang out in one of the shared living areas in the Alamo. Living in close quarters helps quickly create familiarity and friendship. *Photo by Pfc. Tyler Lasure*

Page 2 (bottom):

The Organ Mountains shadow Las Cruces, as seen from Interstate 10, in this photo from Wikipedia. Las Cruces is roughly 65 miles from Camp McGregor.